

REMARKS

The Office action of March 31, 2008, has been carefully considered.

Claims 14-17 and 18-21 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,966,132 to Jacobsen et al in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,145,223 to Flesen, while claims 18 and 22-23 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over Jacobsen et al in view of Flesen and U.S. Patent No. 6,877,565 to Edvardsen.

Claim 14 is directed to a device for removal of cuttings from a borehole with the use of an ejector, comprising a first unit in the form of an ROV including a rigidly attached ejector pump and a connecting hose attached to the ejector pump, the connecting hose terminating at an opposite end in a first coupling part. A second unit comprises an ejector attached at a suction portion to a suction hose and having an inlet provided with a second coupling part. The first coupling part and the second coupling part are constructed and arranged for selective connection to one another to form a coupling between the ejector and the connecting hose.

Claims 22 and 23 are directed to the embodiment shown in Figure 5 in which the suction inlet of the ejector is coupled directly to the guide base around a borehole, and the ejector has an outlet side connected to a discharge hose.

Jacobsen et al discloses an apparatus for removal of cuttings from a borehole with the use of an ejector, in which there is an ROV with rigidly attached ejector pump 12. The Office action admits that Jacobsen et al does not disclose a first coupling part and a second coupling part constructed and arranged for selective connection to one another.

Flesen has been cited for a showing of a similar apparatus for removal of cuttings. According to the Office Action, there is a selective connection between ejector 34 and

connecting hose 40, and it therefore would have been obvious to modify Jacobsen et al as taught by Flesen to arrive at the invention.

Applicants point out that the selective coupling of the invention is designated as 11 in Fig. 1, and is disposed between a connecting hose 4 coming from the water pump, and the water pump inlet to the ejector 5.

Comparing this arrangement to Flesen, the ejector of Flesen is designated 30, with pipe bend 40 serving as the water pump inlet and the water pump designated 38. There is no connecting hose coming from the water pump, and absolutely no suggestion of placing a selective coupling between water pump 38 and pipe 40; in fact, there is only a statement that "the pressure end thereof is coupled to a 180° pipe bend 40..." (see col. 2, lines 55-56).

As to the parts referred to in the Office Action, 34 designates the ejector end of the device, corresponding to the long ejector hose 14 in Fig. 4 of the present application, while connecting hose 40 of Flesen corresponds to ejector 5 of the present application. There is a flange coupling 42 at the junction of these parts (col. 3, lines 7-8), but there is no disclosure or suggestion that coupling 42 is a selective coupling designed for rapid replacement of a hose, nor is there any suggestion that this coupling is any different from the coupling used for corresponding parts in Fig. 4 of the present application.

Flesen also apparently uses a coupling between suction hose 32 and pipe 40, but there is also no disclosure or suggestion of using a selective coupling for rapid replacement of a hose.

Thus, even though Flesen uses couplings, there is no disclosure or suggestion of using selective couplings for rapid hose replacement, and in particular, a selective

coupling between a hose coming from a water pump outlet and the ejector inlet.

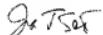
The claimed invention makes it is possible to quickly and easily replace the ejector and attached hoses by detaching the first and second coupling parts. Once detached, the embodiment of Fig. 1 can be easily replaced by the embodiment of Fig. 2, 3, 4 or 5, as needed, without opening the first unit.

The Edvardsen patent has been cited to show a discharge hose connected to the outlet side of the ejector so that sediment can be transported further away from the borehole. Contrary to the statement made in the Office Action, such a discharge hose can also be seen in Flesen as 34, but neither Flesen nor Edvardsen, taken in combination with Jacobsen et al, suggests the invention.

Withdrawal of these rejections is requested.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants submit that the present application is now in condition for allowance. An early allowance of the application is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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